

II.—*Memoir of a Hindu Colony in Ancient Armenia.* By JOHANNES
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A singular account of a certain colony of Hindus, that emigrated from India into Armenia, is recorded in the historical work of ZENOBIUS, a Syrian Bishop and primate of the convent called Innaknian*, who flourished in Armenia in the beginning of the third century. The narrative was evidently written in Syriac, and intended for the Syrian nation, though the writer seems to have subsequently re-written the same in the Armenian language, but with Syrian characters; the letters of our alphabet having been invented a century posterior to that period. By a very long residence in Armenia, ZENOBIUS was successfully enabled to acquire a perfect knowledge of the Armenian language, in which his history has been handed down to us. This interesting work was published in Venice, in the year 1832, being carefully collated with five manuscript copies, written in different periods.

I shall, in the present memoir, first give a description of this Hindu colony from the narrative of ZENOBIUS, and then an account of the religious wars waged between them and the first propagators of Christianity in Armenia.

“ This people had a most extraordinary appearance. They were black, long-haired, ugly and unpleasant to the sight. They claimed their origin from the Hindus. The story of the idols, worshipped by them in this place, is simply this : DEMETR† and KEISANEY‡ were brothers, and both Indian princes. They were found guilty of a plot formed against their king, DINASKEY§, who sent troops after them, with instructions either to put them to death or to banish them from the country. The felons, having narrowly escaped the pursuit, took a shelter in the dominions of the king VALARSACES, who bestowed on them the principality of the country of Taron. Here a city was founded by the emigrants, who called it Vishap or Dragon. Having

* ԻՆՆԱԿՆԻԱՆ *Innaknian*, literally meaning, nine springs or fountains, which existed in the place.

† ԳԵՄԵՏԻ DEMETR is a Greek name, probably borrowed by the Hindus from the Bactrians or the descendants of the troops of ALEXANDER the Great.

‡ ԿԵՍԱՆԵՅ KEISANEY is derived from ԿԵՍ ԿԵՍ *Keis*, which both, in Armenian and Persian, signifies a ringlet or a curling forelock. Thus we have in RICHARDSON ڪيسوي عذير آميز locks fragrant as amber.

§ ԴԻՆԱՍԿԵՅ DINESKEY is the name of the Indian king mentioned in the Armenian text, for which I have in vain searched in all old historical records and chronological tables of the dynasties of ancient India.

come to Ashtishat*, they raised idols there in the name of those they worshipped in India. Fifteen years after their settlement in the country, both of the brothers were put to death by the king, for what fault I do not know. He conferred the principality on their three sons, named KUAR, MEGHTI and HORAIN. The first built a village, and called it after his own name *Kuars*. The second founded a village on the plain, and called it after his own name *Meghti*. The third also built a village in the province of Palunies, and gave it the appellation of *Horains*.

After a certain space of time, KUAR, MEGHTI and HORAIN, of one accord, resolved on changing their abode. They sojourned on the mountain called Kárkí, which to a delightful temperature added a fine and picturesque appearance. It abounded in game, herbs, wood, and all that is adapted for the comfort and convenience of man. Here they raised edifices, where they set up two idols, respectively dedicated to KEISANEY and DEMETR, in honor of whom attendants were appointed out of their own race. KEISANEY had long flowing hairs, in imitation of which his priests allowed the hairs of their heads to grow, which custom was afterwards prohibited by authority. This class of people, on being converted to Christianity, were not deeply rooted in their faith. They durst not, however, openly profess the religion of their pagan ancestors. They continued, therefore, dissemblingly to allow their children to wear plaited hairs on the crown of their heads, in remembrance of their idolatrous abominations."

The description of this idolatrous colony is entirely accordant with the colour, appearance, manners and religion of the present Hindus. The cause of their emigration from India is distinctly stated by ZENOBIUS, but through what route or in what period they found their way into Armenia, it is very difficult to determine. It is, however, clearly evident that they had formed a permanent settlement in our country prior to the commencement of the Christian era. VALAR-SACES, under whose government they found protection, was grandson of ARSACES, the Parthian, and brother of ARSACES the Great, by whom he was appointed king over Armenia, *Anno Mundi* 3852, or a century and a half before Christ. I shall now proceed to give a translation of ZENOBIUS's narrative of the religious wars of this Hindu people with the first Christian converts of Armenia.

* **ԱՇԽԻՇԱՏ** *Ashtishat* was a city in Armenia Major. It was so called from **ԱՇՏ** *sacrifice*, and **ՇԱՏ** *many*; for innumerable sacrifices were offered there to the gods and goddesses of Armenia. It might, perhaps, be well compared to Jagannáth or Káli Ghát of this country.

“ Having taken our departure from Thordan, we intended to proceed to Carin and Harc. St. GREGORY was informed by some of the princes of the existence of two idolatrous temples in the province of Taron, the inhabitants of which offered sacrifices to the devil. Hereupon, our course was changed to the place where these temples stood, with a view to effect their demolition. Having arrived in the country of Palunies, in the extensive village called Keisaney, near the town of Kuars, we met there some of the heathen priests. Having ascertained from the prince of Hashtens that on the following day the great images of KEISANEY and DEMETR were to be levelled to the ground, they repaired to the temples in the dead of the night, and removed from thence all the treasure into subterraneous places. Intimation of the impending danger was forthwith sent to the heathen priests in Ashtishat, who were earnestly urged to collect warriors, and quietly join them on the morrow in order to takē an active part in the battle, which was to be fought by the great KEISANEY with the apostate princes. In like manner the inhabitants of Kuars were also instigated to lie in ambush in the hedges of gardens, and ruffians were sent to waylay the Christians in the forests. The head priest, called ARZAN*, and his son DEMETR, took the command of the troops stationed at Kuarstan, and halted there, awaiting the arrival of reinforcements from other quarters. On the following day they made a descent to the skirts of the mountain, in order to indulge in marauding and pillage.

“ St. GREGORY, accompanied by the prince of Arzrunies†, the prince of Anzevazies, and the prince of the house of Angl‡, and followed by a small number of troops amounting to about three hundred, ascended the mountain in the third§ hour of the day, where ARZAN lay in ambush. They had not the least knowledge of the position of the enemy, and never expected to meet him there. On a near approach to

* ԱՐԶԱՆ *Arzan*, literally means in Armenian, statue, image or idol.

† ԱՐԾՐՈՒՆԻՔ *Arzrunies* was the title of a satrapy in Armenia, and signifies *eagle-bearers*. The Satraps known by this appellation, used to carry eagles before the Arsacian king VALARSACES and his successors.

‡ ԱՆԳԵՂՏՈՒՆ *Angltún*, the genitive of which is ԱՆԳԵՂՏԱՆ *Angltan*, means the house of *Angl* ԱՆԳՂ or vulture. This was a title of distinction, conferred on a noble family in Armenia, compared to that bird of prey, on account of the ugliness and deformity of their features.

§ This is to be understood according to the mode of the computation of time, obtaining in eastern countries. The hour mentioned here, corresponds with nine o'clock in the morning. Thus we have in the Acts: “ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.”

the acclivity of the mountain, ARZAN and DEMETR rushed out from the ambuscade, and on a signal being given, the trumpets of war were sounded, and a furious attack was instantly commenced. This was enough to alarm the Christian princes, whose horses took fright from the sound of the trumpets, and began to neigh and plunge, and create the greatest confusion. Hereupon, the prince of the house of Angl raised his voice and cried, ‘Prince of the Seunies, step forward and see whether these are the troops of the prince of the north.’ The necessary inquiries were made, but no satisfactory information was obtained. The prince of the Seunies returned and insisted on the removal of St. GREGORY and his companions to a secure place, lest, he feared, they might be made prisoners by the enemy, which event would surely excite the anger of the king, and bring the Christian princes into disgrace. ‘Send then,’ added he, ‘a trusty person to recall our troops, for the number of the enemy is alarmingly great, and innumerable flags are seen waving in the air.’

“No sooner was the warning given, than the prince of the house of Angl, gave charge of St. GREGORY to the prince of the Mocks, with instructions to convey him to the castle of Olkan, and there to await the issue of the battle. Information of this was immediately sent to the troops. The prince of the Mocks, accompanied by St. GREGORY, descended the declivity of the mountain, wishing to repair to Kuars. They met with great resistance on the way from a party of the enemy, but by the help of Providence, at last succeeded in effecting their escape. We were, however, pursued by a number of villagers, but being mounted on swift horses, took refuge in the castle of Olkan, where we met with a timely assistance and protection. The villagers having proceeded to the town of Kuars, informed its people of the place of our retreat. The castle of Olkan was, therefore, instantly besieged. We were thus seized with apprehensions for our safety, and forthwith dispatched a messenger with letters to the prince of the house of Angl, conveying him information of the perilous situation in which we were then placed. He immediately sent us four thousand troops, all selected from the army, and furnished with swords, who crossed the river and reached their destination on the following day. After a siege of three days, they took possession of the town of Kuars, and reduced its walls to ruins, and razed all its houses to the ground. The people of the place, that had escaped the stroke of the sword, were conducted to Meghti.

“The Christian princes being apprised of this, ascended the mountain, and descried ARZAN in ambuscade with four hundred men, more or less. They immediately made a sortie on the enemy, and put

ARZAN to flight. The Armenian troops having heard the din of battle, immediately crowded to the mountain. Upon this, ARZAN began to rally, and heap on the Armenian princes torrents of abuse. 'Step forward, said he, 'ye base apostates, who disbelieve the gods of your ancestors, and are opposed to the glorious KEISANEY. Do you not know that it is KEISANEY that wages war with you this day, and will subdue you under our hands, and inflict you with blindness and death?' The prince of Arzrunies, having rushed forward, said, 'Thou worthless bully, if you fight on behalf of your gods, you deceive yourselves; if you fight on behalf of your country, you only display your own folly. Behold the prince of the house of Angl, and the prince of the house of Seunies, and the other nobles, whom you know too well.' To which DEMETR, the son of ARZAN, thus replied: 'Listen unto us, ye Armenian princes! it is now nearly forty years since we are engaged in the service of the mighty gods. We have an experience of their powers, and are assured that they fight with the enemies of their servants. We are not, however, able to cope with you in battle. This is the habitation of the king of Armenia, and ye are his nobles. But, be it known to you all, that though it is out of our power to conquer you, yet we prefer to die a glorious death to-day in upholding the honor of our gods, than to live and see their temples polluted by you. Death is, therefore, more welcome to us than life.' Having spoken this, DEMETR challenged the prince of the house of Angl to a single battle.

"The prince of the house of Angl having accepted the challenge, made an instantaneous attack on ARZAN, who inflicted a wound with his spear on one of the thighs of his antagonist, and was on the point of levelling him to the ground. The prince of the house of Angl having, by an adroit movement, regained his position, thus addressed the enemy: 'Know thou this, ARZAN! that this spot must receive the appellation, by which you are called; for here thou art destined to fall, and be fixed like a statue!' No sooner was this spoken, than he lifted up his arm, and aimed a stroke of his sword on his right shoulder, by which his head, together with his left shoulder and leg, was instantly severed from the body. Thus fell ARZAN, and was fixed like a statue on the ground. He was buried on the very spot, which to this day is called, after his name, *Arzan*.

"Hereupon the heathen army was immediately swelled by re-inforcements sent by the priests from the city of Vishap. The people of Partukh, and Meghti and Astaghon, also crowded to the spot of battle,

and the number of the army was thus increased to five thousand four hundred and fifty.

“ Their arrival in the summit of the mountain, created great noise and confusion in the ranks of the two armies. The heathen priests made a simultaneous attack on the Armenian troops, and by a vigorous pursuit after them made them descend the declivity of the mountain and fly towards the village. The villagers, who lay in ambush, having encountered our troops, stopped their progress, and these being thus hemmed in on both sides, were put to the sword. But the prince of the house of Angl having passed through the ranks of the heathen priests, directed his course towards the mountain, where several men were kept in reserve, and caused great mischief by flinging stones at our horses. DEMETR having observed the prince of the house of Angl ascend the mountain, left the rest below and pursued his steps. He was immediately followed by his troops, all mounted on horses.

“ The battle was resumed on the top of the mountain. Our army waited in expectation of further re-inforcements. The whole of our troops had not yet assembled on the spot, of whom four thousand remained in charge of the prisoners in Meghti, and three thousand proceeded to Basain and Harc. The rest were given to pillage and marauding in the field. Ere decisive blows were exchanged, the approach of night put a stop to further operations. Both armies were, therefore, obliged to encamp on the spot and wait the dawn of the morn. On the following day the expected Armenian troops made their appearance; and a re-inforcement of about five hundred men, from the city of Tirakatar, came to the assistance of the heathen priests. The number of both armies were swelled in this manner. The heathens amounted to six thousand nine hundred and forty-six men, while the Armenians were only five thousand and eighty in all. The trumpets were sounded, and the battle commenced on both sides. In the beginning the Armenians proved victorious over the heathens. But the prince of Hashtens, formerly attached to the party of DEMETR, but now commanding the Armenian army, deserted his post, and joined the ranks of the heathen priests with seven hundred men. The Armenians met with a formidable antagonist in this deserter. Our troops were seized with fear and dismay at the desertion of this brave warrior, whose superiority in military operations was generally acknowledged, and whose extraordinary prowess had rendered him an object of respect and admiration with all the Armenian princes. The rebel attacked our army with the greatest fury, and was flushed with the success of his arms. Hereupon the prince of the Seunies

cried to him in a contemptuous voice, ‘Thou whelp of a wolf*! thou beganst to display the disposition of thy father, and feel a delight in feasting upon carrion.’ The rebel replied in a bold and reproachful manner, ‘Thou vainglorious eagle†! thou only piquest thyself on the power of thy wings; but if thou ever fallest in one of my traps, thou shalt soon feel the weight of my arms.’ The prince of the Seunies could not brook this taunt, but furiously rushing on him, directed the axe which he held in his hand to his helmet, and having driven him to some distance from his troops, pursued him to the eastward of the mountain. Here, opposite to the convent of Innaknian, he brought him to the ground by a violent shove from the horse; and having himself alighted, instantly severed his head from the body, which he precipitated headlong from the mountain. ‘Now,’ said he, ‘let vultures behold you, and know that the eagle has killed the hare.’ Immediately after this, the prince of the Seunies returned to the army; and the place where the prince of Hashtens fell, is to this day called by the appellation of the *Eagles*.

“The Armenians were emboldened by this success, and the prince of Arzrunies attacked the head priest of Ashtishat, called *METAKES*, whom he dragged to the summit of the mountain, commanding a view of the battle. *METAKES* here made a violent resistance, and inflicted a wound on one of the thighs of his pursuer. The latter, burning with rage and a spirit of revenge, levelled a stroke of his scymetar on his neck, which he cut off from the body. He threw down the headless trunk, and the spot where the deed was committed, received the appellation of *Metsakol*.

“The prince of ‡ *Arges* seeing this, consulted his safety in flight, and secured himself in a place of concealment. The prince of Arzrunies, seemingly not noticing this, gently approached the fugitive, and made a sudden and unexpected attack on him. The wretch fled into the forest, where the sharp point of one of the branches of a tree, having passed through his breast, hastened his fall and dissolution. The conqueror returned with the horse of the dead, and the spot was called the vale of *Arges*.

“Immediately after his return he found *DEMETR* and the prince of

* ԳԱՅԼԱԿՈՐԵՒՆ *Gailakoreün*, literally, means a young wolf, or the cub of a wolf.

† ԱՇԱՐԺՈՒՅՑ ՁԱԳ is an abusive mode of expression in Armenian, similar to that of ԱՇ ԸԱՆ ՁԱԳ *thou son of a dog*.

‡ ԻՇԽԱՆՆ ԱՐՁՈՒՅՑ *Prince of Arges* was another title of nobility in Armenia, literally signifying the *prince of the bears*.

the house of Angl wrestling together with the greatest fury. Having made a violent rush, he chopped off the right shoulder of the former, and threw it on the ground. The severed head he carried away in his knapsack. The victorious Armenians put the heathen army to the sword, and the number of the killed amounted to one thousand and thirty-eight. The rest were made prisoners, and stripped of all they were possessed of. The son of the prince of the Mocks fell in the battle by the hand of DEMETR, and this melancholy event spread universal sorrow among the Armenian troops.

“The fall of DEMETR was made a signal of cessation from slaughter, and the trumpet of peace was sounded by order of the prince of the Seunies. The two armies immediately desisted from the continuance of carnage. The surviving heathen priests gladly availed themselves of the occasion, by soliciting the Armenian princes to sanction the interment of their dead. Their request was readily granted. The killed on both sides were collected in heaps, and buried in pits dug for the purpose. Monuments were raised on their graves, bearing the following inscription, in Syrian, Hellenic, and Ismaelitish characters.

ԱՌԱՂԻՆ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄ ՈՐ ԵՂԵՒ ՅՈՅԺ ՍԱՍՏԻԿ
 ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԻՆ ԳԼԽԱՒՈՐ ԱՐԶԱՆ ՔՐՄԱՊԵՏՆ
 ՈՐ ԿԱՅ ԱՅՈՐ Դ ԹԱՂՄԱՆ
 ԵՒ ԸՆԴ ԿՄԱ ԱՐՍ ՀԱԶԱՐ ԵՐԵՍՈՒՆ ԵՒ ՈՒԹ
 ԵՒ ԶԱՅՈ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄ ԱՐԱՐԱՔ ՎԱՍՆ ԳԻՍԱՆԵԱՅ ԿԻՈՅ
 ԵՒ ՎԱՍՆ ՔՐԻՍՏՈՅԻ :

“THE FIRST BATTLE FOUGHT VERY FIERCELY,
 THE CHIEF COMMANDER IN THE BATTLE WAS ARZAN THE HEAD PRIEST,
 WHO LIES HERE INTERRED,
 AND WITH HIM ONE THOUSAND AND THIRTY-EIGHT MEN.
 WE WAGED THIS WAR FOR THE IDOL KEISANEY
 AND ON BEHALF OF CHRIST.”

Here concludes the narrative of the religious war. Our historian, it appears, was an eye-witness to the scene he describes. This victory was celebrated by the Armenians with the greatest pomp and merriment. The heathen temples were razed to the ground, and the images of KEISANEY and DEMETR were broken to pieces. They were both made of brass. The length of the former was fifteen feet, and that of the latter twelve feet. The priests of the idols, with tears in their eyes, intreated the victors to put themselves to death, rather than destroy their mighty KEISANEY. Six of the priests were killed on the spot, for the resistance they offered to the Armenians. On the restoration of peace, the prince of the Seunies proceeded

to the village of Kuars, and succeeded in persuading its inhabitants to forsake idolatry and embrace the Christian religion. Being duly prepared for baptism, they were conducted to the valley of Ayzasan, where they were baptised by St. GREGORY, and thus admitted into the fellowship of the Church of Christ. "The number of persons," says ZENOBIUS, "christened on the first of Navasard*, including men and children, amounted to five thousand and fifty." Females, it appears, were excluded from this number, and baptised on another day, appointed for the occasion. Some of the heathen priests and their families, however, tenaciously adhered to the idolatrous practices of their forefathers. The paternal persuasions of St. GREGORY had no effect upon their minds. "Remember this well," said they to the Armenian princes, "that if we live, we will make you a recompense for your treatment; but, if we die, the gods will wreck their vengeance on you all on our behalf!" Hereupon the prince of the house of Angl ordered them to be taken to the city of Phaitacaran†, where they were imprisoned and their heads shaved. The number of these prisoners amounted to four hundred.

It is impossible to know what was the number of this Hindu colony at the time of their emigration from India into Armenia. We are, however, certain, that from the date of their first settlement in the Armenian province of Taron to the day of the memorable battle, a period of about four hundred and fifty years, they must have considerably increased and multiplied, and thus formed a part of the population of the country. No vestiges of this Hindu race can, at present, be traced in Armenia, save the record of their exploits, handed down to us in the narrative of ZENOBIUS‡.

* ՆԱՒԱՍԱՐԴ *Navasard* is one of the ancient Armenian months, corresponding with the month of August. An account of these months is given by M. BROSSET in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique* for December 1832, page 526.

† ՓԱՅՏԱԿԱՐԱՆ *Phaitacaran* was the capital of an extensive province of that name, where SANATRUK, the great Armenian Satrap, proclaimed himself king immediately after the death of TIRIDATES. It is situated on the confluence of the rivers Araxes and Kur.

‡ Our historian was also called by the appellation of ԳԼԱԿ *Glak*, whom St. GREGORY appointed primate of the convent of ԻՆՆԱԿԻՆԵԱՆ *Innaknian*, which afterwards received the appellation of ԳԼԱԿ *Glak*.